Back in 1983, I had the honor of publishing a joint paper with David Flusser in New Testament Studies (vol. 29, pp. 25–47) entitled “Evidence Corroborating a Modified Proto-Matthean Synoptic Theory.” In it we sought to reconstruct the form of a Hebrew original behind certain pericopes of the Synoptic Gospels.

More recently I worked together R. Menahem on a similar project regarding the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, who are hired at various hours of the day yet all receive the same payment (Mt. 20:1–16). We intended to publish his collection of rabbinic parallels to the form and content of the parable, together with my contributions on the Greek form in which it occurs in Matthew’s Gospel.

The sad and untimely death of R. Menahem, a dear friend to many of us, has delayed further, though hopefully not prevented, completion of the project. Both of us, however, had already selected portions of our work to be published in this volume in honor of Professor Flusser.

The translation of the New Testament into Hebrew by Franz Julius Delitzsch (1813–90) has long commanded respect among researchers into the Jewish background of the New Testament. Revising his work many times, Delitzsch took endless care to find the appropriate Hebraic idiom and terminology, using for this purpose rabbinic as well as biblical writings.

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard is one of many passages, especially in the Synoptic Gospels, where the close parallels between the Greek text and Delitzsch’s translation suggests that the Greek is in fact a very literal translation of a Hebrew original. R. Menahem and I were able to reinforce this suggestion by showing that even in the places when Delitzsch translated somewhat freely, a closer Hebrew parallel usually exists. It was possible thus to revise Delitzsch’s work mainly for two reasons. First, the range of evidence for the Greek text (manuscripts, versions, etc.) has been enlarged and more system-
atically studied since his time. Second, Delitzsch sought to translate throughout into a biblical style of Hebrew, preferring also the forms of the classical to those of the later biblical prose.

In respect of the manuscripts, I found that there seem to be traces of two slightly different versions of the text. Either the first is a somewhat expanded version of the second, or the second is a pruned version of the first. That the second hypothesis is in the main correct is shown by the fact that most of the extra words in the longer version (represented typically by all or most of manuscripts C and W, minuscule families 1 and 13, and representatives of the Old Latin version) supply correspondences to Hebrew idiom where they are lacking in the shorter version.

Regarding the Hebrew style, there was confirmation of a finding (concerning other Synoptic pericopes) in my joint paper with Professor Flusser, namely that the narrative framework of the putative Hebrew original is generally bibli-cizing in style, but that the spoken dialogues are often largely or wholly in the style of rabbinic Hebrew. In one place, however, the rabbinic idiom also seems to have penetrated into the narrative framework (verse 7).

It was thought appropriate, accordingly, to present a threefold text: my choice of Greek text in the middle, Delitzsch on the left and the revised Hebrew version on the right. Significant variants in the Greek text (including all differences from the text of the 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece are indicated in the following way: [ ] square brackets enclose words missing in numerous witnesses; ( ) round brackets enclose words whose order is different in numerous witnesses.

### Delitzsch

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<th>Revised Hebrew</th>
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<td>19. καὶ ἐκεῖνοις εἴπεν,</td>
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<td>21. εἰς τὸν ἀμπελώνα [μου],</td>
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וכישר

(2) ויהי, יהיה ומה

לכם, אתן

(3) שוכו עשה, עשה (6)

הכפר והוד.

(4) וזקזק.

אשcer, אתן

(5) וילנו.

בכפרה ושћיה.

(6) ויהי, יהיה ומה

לכם. יותן

(7) ובאנו, אבנו

לך וּלך

(8) ויהי, יהיה ומה

לכם, אתן

(9) ובאנו, אבנו

לך וּלך

(10) ויהי, יהיה ומה

לכם, אתן

(11) ובאנו, אבנו

לך וּלך

(12) ויהי, יהיה ומה

לכם, אתן
What follows is an English translation of the revised Hebrew text. In order to facilitate understanding of the verse-by-verse commentary where the latter refers to the Hebrew, the Hebrew word order has been followed as closely as possible. Words hyphenated in English represent a single Hebrew word (note, however, that those Hebrew particles — such as the definite article — which are written together with the following word, are here treated as separate words). Italicized words, as in the AR and NASB, correspond to no word in the Hebrew, but have to be supplied in English. As in the Greek text, square brackets enclose those words whose Greek equivalents are attested only in certain authorities (in verse 12, no authority attests to “its,” but Hebrew style demands it); parentheses enclose words for which different orders are attested in the Greek; the double square brackets at the end enclose a sentence which occurs as a variant and is indeed Hebraic, but which we consider belongs not to the

English Translation

[polllol yap elosw klptol,] viqwos wwhwos.
Hebrew original of this text (but rather only to Mt. 22:14). In verses 8 and 13, a stroke separates words representing significant alternatives in the Hebrew.

1. For like is the kingdom of heaven to the owner of a house, who went-out in the early-morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.
2. And he-agreed with the laborers on a denarius for a day, and he-sent them into his vineyard.
3. And he-went-out at the third hour, and he-saw others standing in the market not-working.
4. And to them he-said: “Go also you into [my] vineyard, and whatever will-be due I-will-give to you.”
5. And they-went. [And] he-returned and he-went-out at the sixth hour and the ninth, and he-did the same.
6. Also at the eleventh [hour] he-went-out, and he found others standing [not-working]. And he-said to them: “How is it here you are standing all the day not-working?”
7. They-say to him: “Because no one hired us.” He-says to them: “Go also you into [my] vineyard, [and whatever will-be due you-shall-receive].”
8. And there-was evening, and the owner/lord of the vineyard said to his steward: “Call the laborers and pay [them] the wage, beginning with the last and ending with the first.”
9. And there-came those from the eleventh hour, and they-received each a denarius.
10. And there-came the first, and they-thought that they-would-receive more, (and they-received — also they — each [the] denarius).
11. And they-received it, and they murmured about the owner of the house,
12. saying: “Those last — one hour they-worked, and equal (to us them) you-made, who ourselves-bore the burden of the day and [its] heat.”
13. And he-answered and (he-said to one of them): “My neighbor, I am not in-debt to you; is-it not a denarius you-agreed with me?
14. Take up what-is yours — and go/yours. And I — it is my wish to this last to give as to yourself.
15. [Is-it] not permitted me (to do as my wish) with my own? Is your eye evil for that I am good?”
16. Thus will-be the last first and the first last. [[For many are called, but few are chosen.]

Commentary on the Text

These notes present a brief explanation of the choice of Greek text and the revisions made to the translation of Delitzsch.

1. The usual rabbinic form is שמים מלכות without the definite article introduced by Delitzsch. In Judg. 19:22-23 occurs, but here the Septuagint has ἡμέρα, whereas ἅλωματος normally corresponds to מָיָם. In this verse, Delitzsch had difficulty in translating מָיָם, since the few occurrences in Tisch-
Endorf’s edition of the Septuagint are inappropriate. He therefore rewrote the sentence, introducing the verb ἔστη. However, ἔστη in Tischendorf is translated ἀµα τῷ ἀναβαλεν τὸ δρῆπον in Manuscript A at Judg. 19:25 (Tischendorf with B has ὡς ἀνεβη τὸ πρωί), suggesting that ἀµα represents a preposition and not a verb also here in ἀµα πρωί. Since πρωί regularly stands for κατὰ in the Septuagint, but then ἀµα regularly has other translations (δρήπος, etc.), it is less likely than ἐστὶν κατὰ or possibly ἐστὶν πρωί (τὸ πρός πρωί in manuscripts of Judg. 19:26 and Ps. 46:6, but apparently less common in rabbinic times).

2. Here the Septuagint does not help in determining the equivalent of σμφρωνέω; ἐστὶν is more likely than ἐστὶν, and another possibility is ἔστη. There is no justification in the Greek for Delitzsch’s introduction of the noun ἔστη; rather the preposition ἐκ probably stands for ἐπὶ.

3. Here Delitzsch changed the order of words in the Greek at the end of the verse, but it is appropriate to the use of repetition in Hebrew style that (like ἄργους) the word ἐστὶν should come at the end of the sentence, as it does again twice in verse 6. Instead of ἔστη (and the corresponding references to hours in the subsequent verses), another possibility is ἔστη (etc.; see mBerakhot 1:1; 4:1; mSanhedrin 5:1-3); on the one hand, the Greek and the Hebrew would then have the same word order (note especially verse 5), on the other, the Greek has ordinal and not cardinal numbers.

4. According to Septuagint parallels, the verse could also begin ἐστὶν, except that this would fit awkwardly with the following ἔστη. The word μον (found in C Θ f¹ thirteen it sa and other witnesses) is required by Hebrew style. The late biblical Eccles. 3:22 suggests that ἔστη corresponds to ἔστη (which becomes frequent in rabbinic style) but Delitzsch then could find no biblical equivalent for δικαίων from the root δικ and so resorted to a paraphrase. It seems, however, that δικαίων corresponds to rabbinic דולא, which likewise has two dimensions of meaning (both “merit” and legal “innocence” or “justification”). Note that when Paul quotes Gen. 15:6 in Rom. 4:2, he may be understanding Abraham’s דוקא דוקא דוקא in the sense of the rabbinic דוקא דוקא. See further below on verse 13.

5. Whether or not δὲ is to be omitted (with B W Θ f¹ thirteen it and others), the Hebrew equivalent is certainly יָשָׁה, since the Septuagint uses πάλιν systematically in two ways: when it follows the opening verb, it corresponds to רַע; but when it precedes, to the construction רַע. The concluding ἡσαύτων cannot, as in Delitzsch, correspond to ἡσαύτων, which in the Septuagint is typically κατὰ (or ὡς) τῷ θεῷ τοῦτο; rather, it stands for ἡσαύτων (as Judg. 8:8; other Septuagint equivalents are ὡς αὐτὴν and ἐμεῖς) or perhaps ἡσαύτων, which would echo the opening ἡσαύτω in verse 1.

6. The Greek word order suggests an opening with ὅ (a Septuagint pattern); if verse 4 (see there) begins ὅ, then one would prefer here the more emphatic ἐκ, but this has normally an equally emphatic equivalent in the Septuagint (ἐκ δὲ or καὶ γὰρ or καὶ γε). The words ὄραν and ἄργους are found in almost exactly the same witnesses (C W f¹ thirteen and Old Latin manuscripts), showing that the same hand here — and probably throughout the passage — either added or (as we argue) pruned. Although the omission of ὄραν is possible according to mishnaic usage (phrases like ὅ ἐστιν ὅ ἐστιν and ἔστιν ἔστιν occur in the pas-
sages cited above regarding verse 3), the mention of **בטלים** alongside **עומדים** is needed to balance the repetition of both words at the end of this verse, where also (cf. verse 3) the Hebrew word order must accord with the Greek order in order to bring out the correspondences between the repeated keywords. Delitzsch's changes of word order obscure these patterns faithfully preserved in the Greek. The interrogative **ונ** represents **מה** rather than **למה**, that is, the owner of the vineyard is expressing surprise rather than insinuating that the laborers are willingly unemployed; compare 2 Kings 7:3, where the Septuagint translates **מה** as **ונ** **מה** **מה** **וה** **מה** **מה**, a question which (in its context) has a comparable rhetorical tone. Finally, **לֶּגֶת** may here as in the next verse (see there) represent **לֶּגֶת** rather than **לֶּגֶת**.

7. In this verse, it is remarkable that neither sentence begins with the **קָא** or **כָּל** that indicates biblicizing style; also both introductory verbs are in the present. It seems, therefore, that **לֶּגֶת** **אֵלָה** and **לֶּגֶת** **אֵלָה** represent the formulae **לֶּגֶת** **אֵלָה** and **לֶּגֶת** **אֵלָה** found in rabbinic dialogues. (Since the corresponding past forms **לֶּגֶת** **אֵלָה** and **לֶּגֶת** **אֵלָה** are even more common, they are also a possibility here.) At this point, rabbinic Hebrew not merely appears in the spoken utterances, but even penetrates into the framework of the narrative, which is otherwise basically biblicizing. The word **מּוּל** required for Hebrew style, appears mainly in the Old Latin and other early translations, but also in C3 D Z among Greek manuscripts. The continuation **לֶּגֶת...לֶּגֶת אֵלָה** appears in C* W f13 as well as manuscripts of early translations; on its rendering in Hebrew, see above verse 4 and (for **לֶּגֶת** **אֵלָה** below verse 9. It may be original, as anticipating the occurrences of **לֶּגֶת** **אֵלָה** in verses 9–11, but see below on verse 16.

8. This verse is interesting for the different nuances implied by possible alternatives in the Hebrew. At the beginning, **יִרָד בָּעֵר וַיִּהְיָה** (Delitzsch) is precisely the construction found in Gen. 29:23 and Ex. 16:13, but **יִרָד בָּעֵר וַיִּהְיָה** would echo the sixfold use of this phrase in the first chapter of Genesis (both Gen. 1:5, etc. and Gen. 29:23 have **קָא** **גָּנֶת** **גָּנֶת** ♦, while Ex. 16:13 has **גָּנֶת** ♦; thus the presence or absence of ♦ can only be guessed). Instead of **בָּעֵר וַיִּהְיָה** (the usual Hebrew form), also **בָּעֵר וַיִּהְיָה** is conceivable (cf. 1 Kings 16:24; also Gen. 40:7); in both cases, the Septuagint has **כָּל** , **כָּל** would (as does **כָּל** ) suggest to the listener or reader that the owner of the vineyard indeed represents God. The rabbinic equivalent of **כָּל** **כָּל** (which does not occur in the Septuagint) is precisely **כָּל** **כָּל** as a loanword; Delitzsch's choice of biblical **כָּל** **כָּל** had little to recommend it (except that the Targum has **כָּל** **כָּל** for **כָּל** **כָּל** at Esther 2:3), but has found unanticipated corroboration in the Dead Sea scrolls, where the **כָּל** is an eschatological figure, as presumably in this parable (see the article of R. Menahem in this volume). The word **כָּל** **כָּל** (relegated to the apparatus by Westcott and Hort and already by Tischendorf — it is lacking in Sinaiticus — but restored to the text in the 26th ed. of Nestle-Aland) is found in B D Θ as well as W f1 f13. The combination of **דֶּרֶךְ מַעָּט** (participle) with **זָעַּב** (preposition) recurs in Lk. 23:5 and Acts 1:2, while in Gen. 44:12 it is used to translate precisely **הֶלְׁכֶה בַּבּוֹסֶת כָּל** (in 1 Chron. 27:24 the same combination of verbs appears as two verbs in Greek); note that in Acts 10:37 **דֶּרֶךְ מַעָּט** (which is indeed literally **בַּבּוֹסֶת** is used as a
preposition (not agreeing with any subject), suggesting that its use may be prepositional rather than adjectival in other occurrences too.

9. The variant אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ דְּבָדּ (D Θ f¹³, etc.), if original, would correspond to the use of אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ (as Job 17:5; 19:6) or possibly אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ (as Ex. 3:18; 10:17). Delitzsch added אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ (for which there is no textual evidence) to make the Hebrew more elegant. While אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ is certainly the usual biblical equivalent of לָאָבָדּ (and so we leave Delitzsch's choice of translation), possibly the correct word here is אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ (which occurs first in late biblical Hebrew), since it has more the connotation of passively receiving what one is offered (which fits the parable), whereas אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ suggests a more active taking (see also below on verse 11). Note that all the different forms of לָאָבָדּ in verses 9–11 (aorist, future, aorist participle) correspond to a single form in Hebrew; the repeated אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ thus has a rhetorical impact which is diluted in the Greek. Although רָזִּי (Delitzsch) is more usual Hebrew than רָבִי, the absence of רָזִּי (to which nothing corresponds in the Greek either here or in the next verse) is possible and fits the sense of the parable (the reward is not something of which one can receive more or less, but something which one either receives or does not receive).

10. The content of the story requires that this and the previous verse begin in the same way, as indeed they do in the Greek; Delitzsch's introduction of אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ was thus mistaken. Perhaps he read (as many manuscripts and the Textus Receptus) אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ in verse 9, and אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ in verse 10, but these are just alternative Greek renderings of אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ, whereas אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ would be rendered by אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ (cf. Num. 7:89 and Ezek. 48:6) or by something else less usual. Since אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ does not occur in the Septuagint, his אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ merely a guess; better is to put just a verb (our אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ is simply one possibility). In the manuscripts, there are five different endings to the verse. But אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ (as in C D W f¹) must come before the other phrase; putting אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ at the end of the verse (as in the 26th ed. of Nestle-Aland) destroys the needed parallel with verse 9. The presence of אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ is more doubtful, although the sense of the story favours it (these laborers, too, receive the reward for working in the vineyard). Possibly to אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ represents the word order אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ יִדְעָה יִדְעָה אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ, in which case verse 9 also ends with אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ.

11. The beginning of this verse, even more than that of the previous one (see there), diverges in Delitzsch from the standard Hebrew equivalent; רָזִּי אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ would require something like אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ. For אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ, both אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ and אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ are possible (they are respectively Ketiv and Qere for אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ at Num. 14:36), but the second alludes more strongly to אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ at Lev. 19:13 (meaning to hold back wages overnight). A more remarkable pun, however, is possible if (see verse 9 above) אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ represents אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ (piel) and אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ (qal), a rabbinic Hebrew word which means to complain loudly.

12. If אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ is to be inserted after אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ (with C* W f¹³, etc.), it corresponds to Hebrew אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ, which could even be part of the laborers' answer. The order אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ (with B C W Θ f¹, etc. and the 26th ed. of Nestle-Aland) is correct (against the 25th ed., following Β D Z f¹³ and others), since it brings אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ next to אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ and אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ next to אִלַּחְוֹנְתֶּהוּ. There is no need to reorganize the verse here as Delitzsch did; the laborers' complaint sounds all the more vehement in
Hebrew if one follows the exact Greek word order. Delitzsch's 'כבד' for βάρος is unidiomatic. At the end of the verse, the Greek lacks a needed אֶחָד (the Hebrew noun must have the pronominal suffix).

13. The order εἶπεν εὐλογήσας is found in C L W Z f¹ f¹³ and some Old Latin manuscripts (cf. on verse 6 above). In the Greek, οὐκ ἀδικῶ reflects and contrasts with δικαίον in verse 4 (and probably verse 7). In rabbinic Hebrew this is imaginable rather than楽しい, but see below on the next verse. Since in Hebrew a verb cannot be negated with a prefix like Greek ἀ(ν), the contrast can be made only by using a pair of contraries which is so well known that the one contrary automatically recalls the other. The terms זכאות and (הוּבָה) are such a pair. Thus if here οὐκ ἀδικῶ se represents לַעֲדֵי (which fits the context well) and there δικαίον represents לְעוֹלָם, the Greek contrast may indeed reflect an original contrast in Hebrew. On συμφωνέω, see above on verse 2.

14. Although Delitzsch continues to use 'לקח', the Greek here has ἁπάντησα from ἄπαντησα, which corresponds to Hebrew שָא. Since 'שא' is attested in the Mishnah, meaning "to receive a wage," ἁπάντησα must correspond to שָא. In the second half of the verse, the exact Greek word order is possible in Hebrew too. Also ὥσον καὶ οὖν should be לֶךְ כִּי rather than לֶךְ כִּי, since together with in the previous verse (ἐταίρος is a standard Septuagint equivalent of גד) there is an allusion to the famous "כִּי לְךָ בָּא עַל אֹתִיט תָּפָא" of Lev. 19:18; since there the Septuagint has πλησίον instead of ἐταίρος, the allusion here cannot be seen in the Greek but only through considering the Hebrew original.

15. Here the first η (with C W f¹ f¹³ Old Latin and others, i.e., the witnesses found in verse 6 and elsewhere) is probably right, since η οὐκ corresponds exactly to שלָה and the double η reflects the rhetorical impact of the double interrogative ה in the Hebrew. Placing ποιήσατε before δὲ λέω (with C W f¹ and some Old Latin) gives more natural Hebrew than the reverse order (with B D Z f¹³ and other Old Latin). It is appropriate for עין קֶרֶע to precede עֵינִי קֵרֶע as in the Greek, since this order corresponds to the frequent rabbinic עֵינִי קֶרֶע (biblically לְעוֹנָה עֵינִי קֶרֶע occurs only at Deut. 28:54–56 and רֶאֶעַת עֵינִי קֶרֶע at Deut. 15:9; more common is the impersonal אֲדֹיֵי קֶרֶע). Besides כָּכָה (the usual rabbinic form of biblical כָּכָה) also כָּכָה would be possible; the difference is that כָּכָה has more a present and כָּכָה more a future connotation. The sentence πολλοί γάρ ἐγὼν... seems not to belong here at all, but only at Mt. 22:14 (its other occurrence). It occurs, however, precisely in C W f¹ f¹³ and the Old Latin (as well as D Θ and other early translations), i.e., in the group of witnesses which frequently were found to contain the more appropriate variant. This variant, however, is different in character from almost all the others (excepting only the end of verse 7), since it is a whole additional sentence, whereas they are single additional words or changes in word order. It may be that the group of witnesses concerned represents a tendency to conserve all that one finds, i.e., on the one hand, someone's addition from another part of this gospel, but also, on the other, single words coming from the original Hebrew which someone else had pruned.

Immanuel 24/25